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Self-motivation for smoking cessation among teenagers: Preliminary development of a scale for assessment of controlled and autonomous regulation

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Abstract

Two studies are reported in which the aim was to develop a short self-report scale to assess Motivation for Smoking Cessation in Teenagers (MSCT). An initial pool of 29 items was developed from previous work and through interviews with 50 teenagers in an attempt to assess the constructs of autonomous and controlled regulation. Using responses from a further 198 teenagers, Principal Component Analysis provided evidence for a two component structure, reflecting autonomous and controlled regulation. On the basis of these results, 12 items were selected on the basis of their component loadings in order to compose the final revised scale.

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1. Introduction

Adolescent and teenage smoking is an important area of concern because smokers at this age are likely to become adults with long term smoking behaviours resistant to attempts at cessation (e.g., Chassin, Presson, Pitts, & Sherman, 2000; Janson, 1999; Khudar, Dayal, & Mutgi, 1999). Consequently, targeting adolescents and teenagers for smoking cessation programs before they become habitual smokers is important (Rose, Chassin, Presson, & Sherman, 1996; Williams et al., 2002). Cessation programs among youth have, however, reported only limited success with low participation and high drop out rates (e.g., Burt & Peterson, 1998; Stanton, Lowe, & Gillespie, 1996).

Evidence suggests that interventions for smoking cessation are most effective when harnessing intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivations (Curry, Grothaus, & McBride, 1997; Curry, Wagner, & Grothaus, 1990, 1991). The role of intrinsic motivation in various health behaviours has been investigated in the context of Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1996). SDT suggests that intrinsically motivated and autonomous behaviours are inherently fulfilling and rewarding for a person and therefore increase the likelihood of behaviour change (Deci, Eghrari, Patrick, & Leone, 1994; Vallerand & Bissonette, 1992).

Despite the evidence for the role of autonomous motivation, studies have not specifically focused on adolescent and teenage motivations. The adolescent and teenage years are characterized by the developing need for personal freedom and autonomy. Smoking may be experienced as representing a sense of freedom and autonomy.

In other studies motivation/autonomous regulation has been assessed with the Treatment Self-Regulation Questionnaire (TSRQ) which is based on the work of (Ryan & Connell, 1989). As the general constructs of autonomous versus controlled motivation are applicable in many contexts, the specific phrasing, number of items, question stems and format of TSRQ has been revised by researchers according to the nature of investigation and context of behaviour studied. Only one study, however, reports using the TSRQ with adolescents (Williams, Cox, Kouides, & Deci, 1999). The aim of this study was to develop a version suitable for adolescents and teenagers.

2. Study 1: Development of the initial item pool

The aim of this study was to pilot items with adolescents and teenagers in the UK. A qualitative study was carried out to generate a pool of items grounded in the language and conceptual world of teenage smokers. The purpose was to establish accessibility and comprehension of items for this age group. At the time of the study Solihull Primary Care Trust was expressing concern about the number of young smokers.

2.1. Method

Fifty teenagers (20 girls, 30 boys) participated. They were all students from two colleges (25 from each college) in Solihull, England, between the age range of 16–19 ($M = 17.48$, $SD = 1.18$). Consent to undertake a pilot survey was obtained from College authorities and the

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